The Virginia Joint Commission

JCOTS

on Technology and Science

Monday, October 22, 2018   3:00 p.m.
Manager's Conference Rooms A&B, Dulles Airport
Meeting Summary

The Joint Commission on Technology and Science (JCOTS) held its third meeting of the 2018 interim on Monday, October 22, at Dulles Airport. Delegate Glenn Davis, vice-chairman of JCOTS, called the meeting to order.

The meeting began with an introduction and welcome to two student groups from the University of Virginia (UVA). The Science Policy Initiative at UVA is a student organization formed to empower scientists and engineers to be more informed and involved in science policy at all levels of government. Women in Medical Sciences at UVA is an organization of graduate students and postdocs focused on supporting the inclusion and advancement of women in medical sciences.

Following the introduction, staff gave two brief announcements, the first involving information from a constituent regarding electromagnetic pulses and the second regarding Rocket Labs' recent announcement of its partnership with the Mid-Atlantic Regional Spaceport. Written material relating to both announcements was presented to the members and is available online at the JCOTS website.

Next, Mr. Jake Bittner, CEO of Qlarion, Inc., presented to JCOTS on Qlarion's role in assisting the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) in a pilot data analytics program to combat the opioid crisis. Mr. Bittner informed JCOTS that Qlarion's role was to apply data analytics techniques to existing data to help DCJS make better decisions and to address technical, governance, and cultural challenges that are barriers to the effective use of that data.

As a result, Qlarion has been developing a data-sharing platform as a way of bringing the data together effectively. Qlarion hopes that the platform will help (i) identify high-risk people and groups in advance, ii) improve allocation of scarce resources for treatment and prevention, (iii) quickly detect and react to changes in opioid-related criminal activity, (iv) detect and address anomalies in opioid prescribing patterns, (v) transform response posture from reactive to proactive, and (vi) empower the future of opioid crisis-related research.

After this presentation, members asked Mr. Bittner what he believed the General Assembly should do to advance the use of data analytics. He recommended that the General Assembly continue funding pilot programs like the DCJS platform. Furthermore, he stated that agencies should be accountable for following through on pilot program recommendations. Mr. Bittner stated that often pilot programs identify ways Virginia can save time and money, but the Commonwealth fails to act on the recommendations.

Finally, Delegate Davis informed the committee that Delegate LaRock had an idea for a JCOTS study and that if Delegate LaRock could get four members of the Committee to agree to meet on the topic, it could be taken up by the Committee.

As there were no further agenda items and no public comments, the meeting was adjourned.